

Response to Office Action
09/944,533

and to add language to provide an antecedent basis for comparison of game symbol comparison as well as to more clearly set forth the maintenance of an activated coordinate until an on-screen bonus is issued, i.e. until a bonus triggering symbol is selected and assigned to an activated coordinate.

Turning to the merits, claim 1 has been rejected as being anticipated by Matice et al '449. For anticipation, a single prior source or reference must contain all of the essential claimed elements. Chisum, *Chisum on Patents* § 3.02, *Gechter v. Davidson*, 116 F.3rd 1454; 43 USPQ2d 1030 (Fed. Cir. 1997).

Matice et al '449 does not disclose does not disclose or suggest all the features of the invention expressed in claim 1. Matice et al does not disclose the features of random selection of matrix coordinates to activate (for the on-screen bonus), the maintenance of activated coordinates in an activated state (through the series of hands) until de-activated. Nor does Matice et al disclose or suggest triggering the on-screen bonus when a triggering symbol is selected and assigned to an activated coordinate which also de-activates at least that activated coordinate. There is no disclosure in Matice et al of activation of game matrix coordinates. maintaining activation through subsequent hands and issuing an on-screen bonus (and de-activating the coordinate) when a trigger symbol is selected and assigned into the coordinate.

It is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is not anticipated by Matice et al.
Allowance of claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Claims 2 - 4 and 7 have also been rejected as being anticipated by Matice et al.
The Examiner has not provided any details for the application of Matice et al to the

Response to Office Action
09/944,533

subject matter of these claims. Claims 2 - 5 depend directly or indirectly from base claim 1. For the reasons advanced above, allowance of claims 2 - 5 is respectfully requested. Further claim 2 recites that the processor is configured to identify any activated coordinate. Inasmuch as activation for the purpose of possibly receiving a subsequent trigger symbol (resulting in an on-screen bonus) is not disclosed or suggested by Matice et al, Matice et al does not disclose or suggest identification of any activate coordinates. Claim 3 recites configuring the processor to control the display to display an indicator at any activated coordinate. Matice et al does not disclose or suggest this feature.

Claim 4 recites configuring the processor to display an activation indicator with any game symbol assigned to the coordinate. The Examiner's attention is drawn to FIG. 4 of the application showing the activation indicator (jail cell) with the game (and triggering) symbol displayed as being in jail. Matice et al does not disclose or suggest this feature.

Claim 7 depends from claim 1 to recite that the data structure stores data corresponding to a plurality of bonus activators. Matice et al does not disclose or suggest this feature.

Allowance of claims 2 - 4 and 7 is respectfully requested.

Claims 8 and 9 have been rejected as being obvious over Matice et al. As for the obviousness rejection, the Examiner bears the initial burden of factually supporting a prima facie case of obviousness. MPEP § 2142. To support the conclusion that the claimed invention is directed to obvious subject matter, either the references must

Response to Office Action
09/944,533

expressly or impliedly suggest the claimed invention or the examiner must present a convincing line of reasoning as to why the artisan would have found the claimed invention to be obvious in light of teachings of the references. MPEP §2142.

To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, there must be some **suggestion or motivation** (either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art) **to modify the reference** teachings. The prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest **all** the claimed limitations. MPEP §2143. Obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention when there is **some teaching, suggestion or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to those skilled in the art.** *In re Fine* 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988); MPEP §2143.01. A statement that modifications of the prior art, to meet the claimed invention, would have been well within the ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made, is not sufficient to establish *prima facie* obviousness without some **objective reason to combine the teachings of the prior art.** MPEP §2143.01. Further, if the proposed modification of the prior art would **change the principle of operation** of the prior art invention being modified, then the teachings of the reference are insufficient to render the claims *prima facie* obvious. MPEP §2143.01.

Claims 8 and 9 depend indirectly from claim 1. Claim 8 recites that the data structure stores for each of at least two bonus triggering symbols different bonus award values and issuing the corresponding award when the trigger symbol is assigned to an

Response to Office Action
09/944,533

activated coordinate. Claim 9 provides a formula for calculating the on-screen bonus award value. Matice et al does not disclose or suggest the features of base claim 1 as discussed above. Further there would be no motivation for one skilled in the art to modify Matice et al since Matice et al does not disclose coordinate activation and maintenance and triggering with a trigger symbol. There is simply no disclosure or suggestion in Matice et al for providing a bonus as set forth in the claims herein.

Claim 10 depends from claim 1 and 11 depends from claim 10. Claim 10 has been rejected as being anticipated by Matice et al. Claim 10 recites secondary bonus symbols and claim 11 recites scatter symbols. For the reasons advanced above it is submitted that these claims are not anticipated and are in condition for allowance.

Claim 12 depends from claim 1 to recite assigning a multiplier to an activated coordinate and issuing the on-screen bonus based upon the multiplier assigned to the coordinate which is triggered. Based upon the remarks above and the failure of Matice et al to disclose or suggest the features of base claim 1 as well as employment of a multiplier for activated coordinates, allowance of claim 12 is respectfully requested.

Claim 14 has been rejected as being anticipated by Matice et al. Claim 14 has been amended along the lines of claim 1. For the reasons advanced above, allowance of claim 14 is respectfully requested.

Claim 15 depends from claim 14. For the reasons advanced with respect claim 14, allowance of this claim is solicited.

Claim 16 has been rejected as being obvious in view of Matice et al. Claim 16
Claim 16 recites features along the lines of claim 8 discussed above. For the reasons

Response to Office Action
09/944,533

advanced above, allowance of claim 8 is requested.

Claim 17 recites features along the lines of claim 12. For the reasons advanced above, allowance of claim 12 is solicited.

Claim 18 recites a method with features along the lines of claims 1 and 14 and has been rejected as being anticipated by Matice et al. For the reasons set forth above with respect to claims 1 and 14, allowance of claim 18 is requested. Matice et al does not disclose or suggest the features of coordinate activation and triggering upon assignment of a triggering symbol to an activated coordinate and maintaining an activated coordinate activated until triggered.

Claims 19 - 20 depend from claim 18 to recite features along the lines of claims 8 and 16, 12 discussed above, for the reasons set forth with respect to those claims, allowance of 19 - 20 is requested.

Claim 21 depends from claim 18 and has been rejected as being anticipated by Matice et al. For the reasons set forth above with respect to claims 1 and 18, allowance of claim 21 is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons advance above, it is submitted that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Allowance of all pending claims is solicited. Should the

//

//

//

Response to Office Action
09/944,533

Examiner feel that a telephone interview would advance the case on the merits, the undersigned respectfully requests a telephone interview.

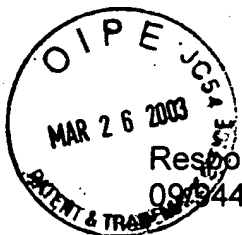
Respectfully submitted,

ANDERSON & MORISHITA, LLC

Dated: March 20, 2003

By: 

Philip J. Anderson
Registration No. 29,887
Anderson & Morishita, LLC
2725 S. Jones Blvd
Suite 102
Las Vegas, NV 89146
(702) 222-2113 Phone



Response to Office Action
09,444,533

Claims Presented

RECEIVED

MAR 27 2003

TECHNOLOGY CENTER R3700

1. An electronic apparatus for playing a casino game comprising:

a display;

AI a data structure storing data corresponding to [the display of] game symbols and winning symbol combinations;

a processor to control the display and an input device to prompt the processor for each play of successive hands, when prompted said processor configured to randomly select and assign game symbol data from said data structure to the coordinates in a displayed X by Y game matrix and to display said corresponding symbol and to randomly select 0 - N coordinates to activate and to maintain any activated coordinate activated through said successive hands until de-activation thereof;

said processor configured to compare selected game symbol combinations assigned into the game matrix to said data stored in said data structure to determine the presence of any winning game symbol combinations;

said processor configured to issue an award for obtaining a winning combination; and

said processor configured to issue an on-screen a bonus award when a game symbol designated as a bonus triggering symbol is selected and assigned to an activated coordinate, issuance of said on-screen bonus de-activating at least said activated coordinate having said triggering symbol assigned thereto; and

said processor configured to maintain [any] activated coordinates active through

Response to Office Action
09/944,533

Cont
A1
said successive hands until an on-screen bonus is issued.

2. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising said processor configured to identify any activated coordinate.
3. The apparatus of claim 2 further comprising said processor configured to control the display to display an indicator at any activated coordinate;.
4. The apparatus of claim 3 further comprising said processor configured to control the display to display said activation indicator with any selected game symbol assigned to the activated coordinate.

7. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising said data structure including data corresponding to a plurality of bonus activators.

A2
8. The apparatus of claim 7 further comprising said data structure storing for each of at least two bonus triggering symbols different bonus award value data, said processor configured to issue the corresponding award value for the bonus triggering symbol when selected and assigned to the activated coordinate.

9. The apparatus of claim 8 further comprising said processor configured to issue an award value according to the following,

Bonus triggering award value/number of active coordinates

10. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising said data structure including at least one second bonus symbol data, said processor configured to randomly select and assign one of a game symbol or second bonus symbol from said data structure to each coordinate in a displayed X by Y game matrix, to display any assigned game symbol or second bonus symbol and to issue an award for obtaining a predetermined number and

pattern of second bonus symbols.

Cont
A2
11. The apparatus of claim 10 comprising said data structure including data corresponding to at least one scatter bonus symbol and said processor configured to issue an award upon obtaining a scatter bonus symbol at a predetermined number of coordinates.

12. The apparatus of claim 1 comprising said processor configured to select at least two coordinates for activation and assign to each a multiplier, said processor further configured to issue said on-screen bonus based upon the multiplier assigned to the coordinate triggered.

14. An electronic apparatus for playing a casino game comprising:

a video display;

a data structure storing data corresponding to game symbols, at least one symbol designated as a bonus triggering symbol and data corresponding to winning symbol combinations;

a processor to control the display and an input device to prompt the processor for each play of successive hands, when prompted said processor configured to randomly select and assign one of a game or on-screen bonus triggering symbol data from said data structure to the coordinates in a displayed X by Y game matrix, to display any assigned game symbol and bonus triggering symbol and to randomly activate any coordinate for an on-screen bonus, said processor configured to maintain any activated coordinate active through the play of one or successive hands of play until an on-screen bonus is triggered;

cont
A2

enabling one or more pay lines of the matrix;
said processor configured to compare selected game symbol combinations assigned into the game matrix and aligned on any enabled pay line to determine winning combinations;

said processor configured to issue an award for obtaining a winning combination; and

said processor configured to issue an on-screen bonus award when a bonus triggering symbol data is selected and assigned to an activated coordinate.

15. The apparatus of claim 14 further comprising a bet acceptor for a player to input wagers to enable at least one pay line.

16. The apparatus of claim 14 comprising said data structure including data corresponding to a plurality of bonus triggering symbols, each bonus triggering symbol assigned a different award value (V), and bonus activators and said processor configured to issue a bonus award according to $(V)/\text{number of active coordinates}$.

17. The apparatus of claim 14 comprising said processor configured to select at least two coordinates for activation and assign to each a multiplier, said processor further configured to issue said on-screen bonus based upon the multiplier assigned to the coordinate triggered.

18. A method for playing a series of game hands on an electronic gaming apparatus of the type having a display and a computer processor to control the display, the method comprising:

storing in a data structure data corresponding to game symbols, at least one

Response to Office Action
09/944,533

cont
A2
defining an on-screen one bonus triggering symbol and data corresponding to winning game symbol combinations;

the player prompting play of a game hand;

the processor in response to prompting of play selecting data from said data structure to assign and display one of a game symbol or on-screen bonus triggering symbol data from said data structure to coordinates in a displayed X by Y game matrix;

configuring said processor to randomly select 0 - N coordinates for on-screen bonus activation, said processor maintaining any activated coordinate active through the play of successive hands of play until a bonus is triggered and deactivating the coordinate when a bonus is triggered;

comparing selected game symbol combinations assigned into the game matrix to data stored in said data structure to determine winning [or losing] combinations, the activation of any coordinate ignored for the purposes of determining winning game symbol combinations;

issuing an award for obtaining a winning combination; and

issuing an on-screen bonus award when a bonus triggering symbol is selected and assigned to an activated coordinate.

19. The method of claim 18 comprising storing data corresponding to a plurality of bonus triggering symbols, each bonus triggering symbol assigned a different award value (V) and issuing said on-screen bonus award according to (V)/number of active coordinates.

20. The method of claim 18 comprising said processor selecting at least two

Response to Office Action
09/944,533

Cont
A2
coordinates for activation and assigning to each a multiplier, said processor further configured to issue said on-screen bonus based upon the multiplier assigned to the coordinate triggered.

21. The method of claim 18 comprising the player making a wager to enable at least one pay line for the game matrix and the processor comparing selected game symbol combinations on each enabled pay line to the data stored in said data structure to determine winning or losing combinations, and issuing an on-screen bonus award where a triggering symbol is selected and assigned to an activated coordinate on an enabled pay line.
